THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (c) No Sir. The first phase of Ganga Action Plan which was launched in the year 1985 has since been completed in March, 2000. Under this Plan, a total of 259 schemes of pollution abatement of the river have been completed which includes installation of 33 Sewage Treatment Plants resulting in creation of additional 865 million litres per day (mld) Sewage Treatment Capacity, 88 schemes of Interception & Diversion of sewage, 43 schemes of Low Cost Sanitation, 28 schemes of Crematoria, 35 schemes of River Front Development and 32 other miscellaneous schemes. These schemes were completed at a total cost of Rs. 433.3 crore. The original sanctioned cost of the Plan was Rs. 277 crore. The Revised estimated cost of Rs. 468 crore was approved taking into account a host of factors which included change in scope (like change in design, change in physical condition etc.) to the tune of Rs. 76.92 crores, change in rates to the extent of Rs. 77.08 crores and Rs. 47 crore on account of Central Share on Operation & Maintenance of works in the States, Research & Development, etc.

Sambhar Lake of Rajasthan

3728. DR. GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA : Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Sambhar Lake of Rajasthan is the biggest salt producing lake of the country, which has been included in World Heritage, listed as Ramsar site;

(b) whether Government are also aware that this historical lake which also has famous Devyani-Tirth, is shrinking day-by-day on account of silting and encroachments;

(c) whether a proposal sent by the Rajasthan Government for saving this lake from further degradation and shallowing is pending for consideration with the Central Government, for the past nine months; and

(d) if so, what action and by when, is proposed to save this legendary lake from dying slow death?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Yes Sir,

Sambhar lake of Rajasthan is one of the 25 Ramsar sites identified from India under Ramsar Convention. This lake has also been included in the list of 71 identified wetlands under National Wetland Conservation Programme for conservation and management. This lake is under stress mainly due to siltation and encroachment, resulting in shrinkage of its catchment area.

(c) and (d) An amount of Rs. 186 lakhs has been released for undertaking various conservation activities like catchment areas treatment, survey & mapping and education awareness in Sambhar Lake from 1989 till date. A proposal for catchment area treatment including afforestation work was received from Govt. of Rajasthan during 2005-06. Funds would be released after due processing during the current financial year.

Increase in Investment for Forest Production

†3729. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the investment is made form Government and private sector to increase the production from forests in the country;

(b) if so, the average annual investment made during the last three years;

(c) the details of this investment made by the pubiic and private sector; and

(d) the increase in the rate of annual producion assessed due to investment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (c) The Central Government is providing financial assistance to the State Governments in protecting the forests from fire etc., and for afforestation and regeneration of degraded forests and adjoining forest lands, increasing the productivity

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.